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"Truth Is One, Men Call It By Various Names."
—Rig Veda

VEDANTA QUARTERLY

Message of the East

WINTER 1959

A PORTRAIT OF CHRIST

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Message of the East

"And behold the glory of the God of
Israel came from the way of the East."
—*Ezekiel*
"Light shall come again from the East."
—*Tyndall*

VOLUME XLVIII 1959 NUMBER 4

THE GREAT COMMANDMENT

by Thomas R. Kelly

Let me talk very intimately and very earnestly with you about Him who is dearer than life. Do you really want to live your lives, every moment of your lives, in His Presence? Do you long for Him, crave Him? Do you love His Presence? Does every drop of blood in your body love Him? Does every breath you draw breathe a prayer, a praise to Him? Do you sing and dance within yourselves, as you glory in His love? Have you set yourselves to be His, and *only* His, walking every moment in holy obedience?

I know I'm talking like an old-time evangelist. But I can't help that, nor dare I restrain myself and get prim and conventional. We have too long been prim and restrained. The fires of the love of God, of our love toward God, and of His love toward us, are very hot. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and soul and mind and strength." Do we really do it? Is love steadfastly directed toward God, in our minds, all day long? Do we intersperse our work with gentle prayers and praises to Him? Do we live in the steady peace of God, a peace down at the very depths

of our souls, where all strain is gone and God is already victor over the world, already victor over our weaknesses?

This life, this abiding, enduring peace that never fails, this serene power and unhurried conquest, inward conquest over ourselves, outward conquest over the world, is meant to be ours. It is a life that is freed from strain and anxiety and hurry, for something of the Cosmic Patience of God becomes ours. Are our lives *unshakable,* because we are clear down on bedrock, rooted and grounded in the love of God? This is the first and the great commandment.

KINSHIP OF IDEALS

Not to be separate from his primal Source constitutes what we call the Heavenly man; not to be separate from the essential nature thereof constitutes what we call the Spirit-like man; not to be separate from its real truth constitutes what we call the Perfect man.

—Chuang Tze

Many come to me and confess their worries. They say, "We have not realized God; how can we attain peace?" Thereupon the thought flashes in my mind: "Why do they say that? Am I then superhuman? I never have known what worry is. And the vision of God? — it is as it were in the palm of my hand; whenever I wish, I can have it. *—Sri Sarada Devi*

A man must strive to attain God with all his body, with all his mind, and with all his speech. By thinking of God one acquires the nature of God. First is the purification of the mind. Then if you direct the mind to the contemplation of God, it will be colored by God-consciousness. *—Sri Ramakrishna*

A PORTRAIT OF CHRIST

*by Swami Paramananda**

Let me draw before you a picture of the Christ as he is conceived in the soul of the East. The mind of the Easterns conceives him as a messenger of light. They clothe him with robe of gentleness, with bearing majestic by divine right; they picture him as the incarnate spirit of love and divine loveliness — lowly of heart, mighty of spirit, brother, friend and saviour of man!

It would be wonderful if all people could be converted to the lofty and beautiful teachings of Jesus of Nazareth, the Christ of the Orient, the lowly, prayerful, devoted, yearning Christ who seeks grace above all other things, who shows man that his first and foremost duty is to find God, to live for God, and to make God a living presence in his life.

What does Christ teach? He teaches love — love which overcomes hatred; not the love that sometimes loves and again hates, but the love which overrules all afflictions, all dualities and becomes the ideal. Is this ideal merely for those who profess Christianity? No, it is a world-ideal. God's spirit is cosmic, universal. It is the common heritage of humanity.

How often Christ told his disciples to go and make peace with their brethren before placing their gifts on the altar! Though we may have the biggest church conceivable, though our altar may be glittering with gold and diamonds, our offering will not be acceptable to God if we have in our hearts aught against anyone.

We too often forget that Christ himself was an Oriental. The Essenes, we know, had a great influence

*From Selected Writings.

on the life of Jesus. John the Baptist himself was an Essene; and it is now admitted by many scholars that the foundation of the Order of Essenes was directly due to the influence of the Buddhist monks, who were sent out as missionaries by the great Indian Emperor, Asoka, about 250 B.C. They came to Palestine, but following their habitual constructive method, they did not seek to proselytize. They merely lived a life of holiness and loving service to others without creating any antagonism; and they won followers through the force and beauty of their character, inspiring them to take up a similar life of simplicity and renunciation, such as we see embodied in the rule of the Essenes and set forth in the life and teachings of Jesus.

Unless we live the life in accordance with our special Ideal, we remain at a great distance from our master and are not worthy to call ourselves his followers. How can you know what Christ stood for unless you live a Christ-life? If you do not represent his teaching in your thoughts and actions, you merely drag down the Ideal. To take his name without following his teaching does not make a man a Christian. We must never compromise with the Ideal; we must never bring it down to our limited plane; we must raise ourselves to it. We must devote our whole life to realizing it; and if we fail, we must blame ourselves, not the Ideal, recognizing our own limitations.

God is infinite but He assumes different forms for the sake of His devotees; yet the Infinite can never be fully expressed in name and form. Therefore the sages define Him as both personal and impersonal. He is beyond mind and speech. He is all that we are capable of grasping, as well as all that is beyond our compre-

hension; for how can the Infinite be fully grasped by the finite mind? Even the divine Incarnations can be only partial manifestations of the Infinite-Absolute.

That one who is capable of feeling the joys and griefs of all other men as his own, he alone is a true example of the Christ-spirit whatever may be the form of his faith. When a follower of Christ shuts his heart against a child of God in any faith, he makes a mockery of his religion, because it is contrary to what Christ taught. Christ was willing to sacrifice his life even, in the service of God. When God so dominates our heart that we are willing also to give up our life, then we are true to the Ideal which he preached. We must create within us an atmosphere of holiness and loving brotherhood which will unite us, first with God and then with our fellow men.

At the present time we are very proud of our mechanical inventions and social progress; but we do not see that our spiritual ideals have become faded. We look upon religion as a matter of tradition and as an important factor in maintaining social order. But religion is something more than that. When we are put through the greatest difficulties and do not grow faint-hearted, that is religion. And whether we are Christian, Mohammedan, Hindu or Jew, if we can maintain the same living faith in God, the same ungrudging love for His children in all circumstances, then we are religious.

How do we know there is a God until we have proved it? Until our soul has communed with Him and lived close to Him, we cannot be absolutely sure that He exists. Religion is a question of plunging within and living with the Ideal. When the Christ-spirit shall truly seize the human heart, then will dawn a new era

of civilization. Whenever the world is thwarted and saddened, it looks for a new vision; but when all goes well, it settles back into the old way. It is natural to turn to God when we are forsaken by men and misunderstood by friends; but we do not truly worship Him until we come seeking nothing of Him. We must outgrow the habit of bargaining, of asking a fair return in personal benefit for our service to God. That attitude always limits our capacity to express the Divine. It also limits the power of God to bless us; for He cannot give us more than we are willing to take; and if we pray for some special thing, setting our heart on that, He cannot bestow on us a greater blessing. That is why Christ's prayer was: "Not my will, but Thine be done."

The divine Incarnations are spiritual sight-givers. They are true redeemers, but they represent a state of being, not separate personalities. The differences we find in these messengers are very small. There are differences in language and in the detail of the methods used, which are accounted for by differences in the speech and customs of the people among whom they came; but fundamentally they all proclaim the same spirit of love and tolerance. Krishna, Buddha and Laotze, Christ and all the other saviours give the same message. The differences which appear spring from the varying human interpretations applied to them; because the followers of the great ones have not been able to realize the ideals which their special masters set forth.

The Christ-spirit cannot exist where there is the least self-seeking. We learn this lesson from the life of every saviour. The great saviours gave their message, whether men received it or not, and they were ready to sacrifice their life for the very ones who denounced

them. So must we do. When like Christ we can disregard the petty things of life and go bravely on — that is what will give us real strength.

The more we can live up to the Ideal which was in Christ, the more shall we become one with the universal Ideal. We must not think that our duty ends when we have heard the teachings of a great saviour. Our duty is not ended until we have fashioned our lives after the life of the Ideal; and made all our thoughts, words and deeds like unto his whom we worship. These great ones came as men to show that what they have done we can do. Outwardly they may appear like human beings, but inwardly their heart and mind are all full of God. So must our heart be full of God also, if we would manifest the Christ-spirit.

The Christ-spirit does not come to us only on certain occasions. When we seek him, he becomes our constant companion. We are very much alone so long as we depend on worldly association. Human friendship changes because it is based on changing things, but divine friendship never changes. If we lean upon that, we shall never feel forsaken. We are not strong in any other way, but only when we put our whole trust in the Divine. We must be able to say, as Christ said, "Thy Will be done." Also we must never grow faint-hearted or lose faith either in God or in our own higher nature.

God manifests in the form of a man that man may comprehend what God is. The Absolute is declared to be unknowable and unthinkable, hence He is beyond the reach of the human mind. But to make it possible for man to understand Him, He assumes personal aspects and comes as a Christ or a Buddha. This is what

is meant by a divine Incarnation. Such a manifestation serves as the connecting link between God and man. He is divine enough to be in touch with God and human enough to be in touch with man, so that man may realize divine things through him.

To the majority the Christ-consciousness or the direct perception of Truth seems something unattainable. But that cannot be. What has happened once will happen again. What has been done can be done: that is the law. The purpose of a divine Incarnation is not merely to manifest his superhuman and miraculous powers, but to point out to mankind by his life and example the goal of existence and man's divine birthright. Saviours do not come to proclaim things which are impossible for man to attain. No, we think them impossible because we do not try to practice them, so our religion degenerates into a blind and thoughtless acceptance of certain fixed forms and doctrines. When religion thus becomes a matter of mere belief and exists only as a theory, having lost its living quality, then God incarnates in human form to re-establish spirituality and destroy materialism.

Thus God manifests Himself at different periods of history in order to give tangible knowledge of His divine nature. To make things that are incomprehensible to the finite mind, comprehensible, He takes finite form. He comes not to display His own glory; no, but to show man how as man he can manifest God; or, as St. Augustine puts it, "God was made man that man might become God."

The purpose of the life and teaching of a great saviour is to open man's eyes to his own higher Self, to awaken more love for God than for mundane things;

or in other words, to make a mortal feel conscious of his immortal nature. In order to gain this consciousness and make it a part of our being we must learn to practice the Christ-ideal in our everyday life. We must picture it. We must make it living to our heart. We must feel its reality. As we cultivate this habit of feeling the living Presence within, our vision will become more and more open to subtle spiritual facts, which otherwise remain vague and unreal.

One man may go to church, pray and sing hymns in the name of Jesus, appearing righteous, but this cannot make him spiritual or bring him blessing so long as he does not manifest the teaching in his life; and there may be another who may never go to a church or utter the name of Christ, but who through the practice of holiness and purity so embodies and radiates the Christ-spirit that he becomes a living symbol of the Christ-life. Such a soul alone truly honors him and proves a worthy follower. As it is said in one of the Buddhist sacred books: "Now it is not thus, Ananda, that the Tathagata (Incarnate One) is rightly honored, reverenced, venerated, held sacred and revered. But the brother or the sister, the devout man or the devout woman, who continually fulfills all the greater and the lesser duties, who is correct in life, walking according to the precepts, it is he who rightly honors, reverences, venerates, holds sacred and reveres the Incarnate One with the worthiest homage."

We do not honor our saviour merely by belonging to a creed founded in his name or by offering him lip-praise. Only as we learn to shape our lives after the model of his own do we prove ourselves worthy of him; and this can be done only by living his teachings. Jesus

the Christ himself taught this lesson to his disciples, when he said to them: "And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say? Every one that cometh unto me, and heareth my words, and doeth them, I will show you to whom he is like: he is like a man building a house, who digged and went deep and laid a foundation upon the rock: and when a flood arose, the stream broke against the house and could not shake it; because it had been well builded. But he that heareth, and doeth not, is like a man that built a house upon the earth without a foundation; against which the stream brake, and straightway it fell in; and the ruin of that house was great."

Ritual and dogma do not make religion, though religion sometimes finds these useful in its practical application; but what grip dogma has upon most religious creeds. Perhaps it is due to this fact that we find more division than unity even in the same religion. When one wants to learn of Christ, one's natural inclination is to go to the institution which bears his name. Yet how difficult it is! Some represent Christ as a militant aggressor, some as a social reformer, some as an intolerant leader, according to their special prejudice.

If we wish to be saved we must connect ourselves with the source of salvation. Unless we know our connection with the Infinite Ocean of life and wisdom, we cannot be saved by it. That is the real significance of the idea that Christ takes the burden of those who come to him. Saviours have come and gone, yet how many souls have failed to recognize them! This shows that we cannot be saved until we have unfolded certain spiritual qualities within ourselves. Man has been given frequent opportunities to save himself. He has been

blessed countless times by God and by great teachers; but he has not been able to profit by them because his mind is under the sway of ego.

Unless the mind is ready, even though a saviour may come he can do little for us. We should take care of this mind, therefore, because it is the determining factor in all our undertakings. Upon it alone rests our success or failure. No one can say then that our destiny depends on anything outside ourselves.

It is only through our life that we can prove the truth of a saviour's message. We must not only hear his words, but assimilate them; and assimilation requires practice, leading an inner spiritual life. Christ declared that not those who merely cry, "Lord! Lord!" will enter the Kingdom of Heaven, but those who do God's will. Living the life is what every saviour preaches; infilling each thought, deed and word with spiritual power. Spirituality is a living force. When we allow ourselves to be wholly guided by this force, resisting all lower impulses, we make ourselves ready for the Lord's saving grace. The mirror of our heart must be washed clean by the practice of forbearance, charity and loving-kindness towards all, then it will be able to reflect the image of our saviour.

Those who are unworthy have not the spiritual sight necessary to perceive a saviour. Who is to know when God comes? Only those who are God-like, whose vision is clear. We must first prepare the field. We must have a real thirst for righteousness in our hearts. We must feel as Buddha felt — that this whole world is a vast prison house, that life is not safe without Truth. Although surrounded by luxury and living in conditions which mortals most long for, he saw misery and death

haunting him at every step and he felt he must save his fellow men from these. To do it he plunged within himself; he fixed his whole heart in his inner being, and that gave him the power to discover the remedy for all mortal ills.

The true saviour is within us. As soon as we analyze and turn our thought inward, we discover that the kingdom of heaven is an inner spiritual state, not an external realm of enjoyment. Merely believing that someone from the outside can save us is not sufficient. Ignorance is the cause of our bondage; rising out of ignorance is our salvation. In accomplishing this, the personal example and inspiration of a saviour or divinely appointed teacher is of incalculable help. We must, however, establish a close relation with him; we must listen to his voice and obey his teachings. We must mould our life in the smallest detail according to his injunctions; we must constantly bear in mind that the saving power of religion does not lie in a superficial acceptance of the form, but in holy living. We must base our daily actions on the fundamental principles of every religion: humility, purity and love. We must give up all hypocrisy and half-heartedness. We must be absolutely sincere and steadfast in our spiritual devotion.

The idea of a saviour cannot be limited to one form or to one conception of Divinity. God comes to earth whenever there is a need; and He comes to all men, not to one special group of people. His form is universal. He is the Infinite Father of all, but He appears to His children in many different garments. When we lack direct perception of Truth, we see differences and sow seeds of discord; but the more we grow in inner wisdom, the more we shall learn to tolerate all creeds and see the same God in all saviours and all religions.

STAND FIRM TO THY POST

by Srimati Gayatri Devi

Hold aloft this light and stand firm to thy post,
Till all wandering souls have reached their goal
in safety.
Service brings strength and renewed life;
Love cures all weariness,
And Faith, the shining jewel of life, performs
all miracles.

This poem, inscribed on the arcade wall opposite the Ashrama library, greets those who climb the hill to the temple. And to those of us who live on the hill-top it stands as a symbol and a motto. Because we are all still human there are times when we lose our vision. Forgetting temporarily the ultimate goal, we lose sight of the significance of our dedicated life. At such times Swami Paramananda's words become a reminder of our purpose in living in this rarified spiritual atmosphere.

It is altogether natural that we human beings should fall under shadows occasionally. There are times when love in our hearts burns brightly, like a flame; again at other times our moods are low and we are conscious of imperfection in ourselves as well as in others and become very critical. Our exalted states are those when we feel wholly united with the Most High, completely at one with our Source and Maker. At such times inspiration surges in our hearts and we feel as if we are on wings. We feel no weariness even though we may work and work and work. Neither is there any lack of faith, either in God or man or in our high destiny. Faith

and love impel us to service, convincing us that we can never do enough. And we feel there is so little we can do to prove our gratitude for the sense of fulfillment we have found in God.

Yes, this is the attitude of an idealist; but let me assure you, the idealistic way of life is also the most realistic. Many of us have a tendency to be reformers. We think we can change the world. We dream that perhaps there could be heaven on earth. We would like to see many things altered. Although our aspiration to bring about betterment is pure and our intention is genuine, still we are somewhat impractical in hoping that such dreams can be realized on a large scale. The world is a place where good and evil are to be found simultaneously. We find nobility, self-sacrifice, man's faith in God and in himself; and also here, in this same world, we find cruelty, harshness, hatred and all manner of iniquities. If we are truly realistic we can acknowledge these facts of life without losing sight of the ultimate good, without becoming unaware of what we can accomplish in an imperfect world. Then our heart is on fire.

There are two kinds of lives which human beings are capable of living, and the great majority live the easier, the natural, what we call the normal life, the extremely personal life. They live just for themselves; for their own gain and happiness, and for those whom they love. They certainly have many idealistic ventures within the confines of that life, and they do very well. But for the one who has once tasted the other kind of life, the impersonal life, the personal life seems extremely limited. However, as long as we are completely fixed in our personal life and can find all our satisfaction in

it, as long as all our hopes and dreams and desires can be fulfilled by that personal life, we cannot have the slightest comprehension of what the impersonal life is. Yet there are people who have somehow enlarged their scope for living; they must reach out; they must break through the bounds. These are the idealists of our world. For them there can never be any personal life for they are not satisfied with that. They have a goal and a mission. They have found something that seems quite intangible to the great majority, but to them it is not intangible. And they will give their all, they will give their life away to realize that goal and to live that impersonal life.

One must be in love with the ideal; one must be faithful and extremely self-sacrificing to meet the demands of such a life. One must have the courage that never fails, and the faith that never wavers. We ourselves are capable of such faith and courage, of such love and self-sacrifice. If we were not, the dream would not entice. At a certain stage of our personal life, if we have any tendency toward idealism, it comes like a dream — a dream of something we have not yet realized. And if we have not the vision and the courage, we can become disillusioned and give up. But we do have the capacity to fulfill this dream in a very realistic manner.

These are not mere high soundings or vague words. A dedicated life is never vague. It is most decisive and distinct. It is a life of hard work, of denial and self-forgetfulness, a life in which one cannot seek for any personal gain, in which there is not time for oneself, no time even to think of one's own salvation. If we really understand the principle involved in living this life we

cannot think of it in terms of sacrifice. That word has acquired a connotation which is not very desirable to some of us. For the dedicated soul there is no such thing as sacrifice. He understands that the lesser must be given up for the greater.

Here is the issue we need to consider: If one wants to live for oneself, one cannot very well live for humanity, or for God. Living for God and humanity is far more rewarding than living for oneself. Rewarding in what way, we ask. Well, what are we seeking? What do we want out of life? The gratification of our small desires? Is that all we want? Or, have we outlined some high aim and objective for ourselves? If so, we can never use the term "sacrifice." We will be willing to make the sacrifice, because behind it lies our greatest achievement. And if we are convinced of this we will move from steadfastness to great stability until we become fully established in our ideal and remain faithful to the end.

This word faith is widely inclusive in its meaning. When two people marry their chief vow is to be faithful to each other, because love is the foundation of conjugal union. It is expected that there will be no break of faith between the two. And when do two people go apart in today's society? When they no longer have faith in each other. Perhaps they did not have it to begin with, but at least they had hoped and believed that there was this bond between them. But when they can no longer be faithful, nothing exists between them; the relationship becomes false.

To be faithful is an ideal of great significance. When we give ourselves to the impersonal life, it is imperative that we be faithful, and that we remain so and

never forsake our duties. "Stand firm to thy post." Everybody has a post in life. Most of us have specific loyalties — to families, to friends, to country. Some have even a superficial faithfulness to religion — superficial because it is fidelity to a church or an organization, to something that is only a structure. To be faithful to God! That entails a great deal; it demands transformation of our personal life. How many of us hope for that? Faithfulness is a very important virtue. We must be faithful in every relationship: as children to parents, as wives to husbands and as citizens to our country. We do not have much regard for the person who is disloyal; and the trait of fickleness causes instability in a human being.

In the impersonal life, too, fickleness can manifest itself. We may want to forsake our post because of disillusionment and discouragement. Disappointments are tremendous in life, be it lived in the world or on the path of spiritual striving. We say to ourselves, "Shall I give up or shall I persist?" This choice rests with each of us. If we can persevere, overcoming whatever degree of instability or fickleness we discover in our nature, in time we come to faith. Eventually we become strong, unflinching, immovable.

The chief characteristic of spiritual human beings is their strength. They may be absolutely passive in their approach to life, non-violent, gentle, humble, meek, and they will not hurt anything; they will not raise hand or voice against anyone. They may give the appearance of utter passivity, but it is because they are strong that they are capable of such non-resistance and humility.

If you are established in strength, then you have nothing to fear. You are not afraid of discouragement

because you are realistic. Certainly you know there will be failures in your own path, and in the paths of those whom you have trusted. But you acknowledge: that is life; some will fail you; others will not. For yourself, however, it is imperative that you retain your faith in man, in his intrinsic goodness and ultimate capacity to realize his divinity. To accomplish this you must have love. "Love cures all weariness," the poem says. Even when the loved one has not fulfilled your dreams of him, you do not give up hope. You do not become unloving, or switch to lower ways because you have experienced disappointment. This is what faithfulness means: that you never give up, that you never want to give up, because it is love that guides you, it is faith that sustains you in service and it inspires you to believe that there is always the miracle which may happen unexpectedly.

Do not lose heart, do not give up easily. Always hold fast. Stand firm. Suppose, even after you have held fast in the thing you have hoped and dreamed for, that the dream has not been realized. Still there is time. Why must we think in terms of limitation? When we have comprehension of the impersonal life, we no longer think in that manner. Certainly we have to move within the bounds of this life, yet within restraint there is also a degree of freedom. Freedom is not gained in trying to overthrow our obstacles by violence or force because they oppose us. Rather, it is by understanding, by learning to conquer and transcend them that we gain inner freedom.

Understanding is spoken of in the Upanishads as man's supreme blessing. He must understand life, its processes, what it has to offer him, and what it expects

from him. Then there is no problem and the personal problems that arise in personal life are overcome.

You must learn to expect the best and the highest of yourself. Do not belittle yourself at every turn of the way by saying, "I cannot do this. Life is too severe, too disappointing, and its demands are too exacting. I cannot struggle any more. I give up." Why do you strain? Why do you struggle? You do not really have to do so. Your own nature commands you to go beyond that nature. Recognize your true Self. Know the power you possess within yourself. Accept yourself at the highest level, believe in your unused resources, your divine potentialities. Evaluate yourself by the highest standard.

This is not egotism, neither is it self-importance. To be faithful to our ideal we must have unwavering faith and this faith must be increased. In order to make ourselves strong individuals, we must walk through life with indomitable courage and assurance. We must not fail ourselves; we must never accept defeat. If we persist, being willing to stand firm, in the accomplishment of our duties and obligations, faith will grow stronger within us and we shall gain a deeper understanding. Duties will no longer be duties and sacrifice will be no more than renunciation. In order to possess such understanding and to practice renunciation we cannot do without the three primary virtues, love, faith, and their expression in service.

Many times have I pondered upon these words: "Stand firm to thy post till all wandering souls have reached their goal in safety." We do not always remain at our post merely because that is where we want to be, but because our ideal compels us to do so. Those who

stand firm are the custodians of many souls, of the weak, of the faltering, of the struggling ones. The love in the heart of such a person naturally binds him to the duty of watching over souls who still wander and do not know their course.

Those who have realized their own higher Self are the ones who have come to the awareness of what their service in life should be. They know that it is to guard and lead the wandering souls safely to their goal. And in order to do so, they must never leave their post.

Sri Ramakrishna once told the Holy Mother, "I am leaving you behind so that you may watch over all these people." He pointed to the great metropolis of Calcutta and said, "In a vision once I saw them as millions of little worms!" We know that he never thought of human beings as worms; instead he regarded them as the manifestation of the Divine. Yet he had such a vision. And it is true, in certain stages of our spiritual life we are like worms crawling on earth. We have not yet received our wings. But the time will come when we shall move out of that form; we shall no longer crawl; we shall walk and we shall even fly; we shall become as butterflies.

What is this post to which man must stand firm? It is not something physical or stationary. No, it is his role of service in life, the role of a dedicated life, in which he is aiming to realize his ideal. What should he do with his life? How should he use it? Once we have been quickened in our heart with the desire to serve we have no alternative, we cannot escape its calling. We give ourselves, we give our life, we give all. Many are the urges and drives that control and direct us toward our destiny; and one of them — the most im-

portant one — is the urge to give ourselves away. For whom? For what? The answer is, life is meant for one purpose: to be used, to be given in one's fullest capacity. When we come to feel this we will also realize that we are but an instrument in the hands of the Power that leads, guides, and directs our destiny. We will no longer be conscious of being our small self. Furthermore we learn that we have no longer a will of our own; we fulfill only one will — the Supreme, the Divine will.

It really does not matter how insignificant a person is, if he sincerely longs to be of higher service to the world, if he wants to give himself, then he forsakes the personal and seeks the idealistic way. He cannot do otherwise. All of us have these drives. Some people live to serve their country; others live to make their families happy; still others live for humanity. They work hard all their lives; they make many sacrifices because their love is so great. Then there are those who give their life to God and through Him and for His sake serve humanity. The man of the world, the humanitarian and the mystic all serve the ideal, each in his own way, according to his drive and capacity. The mystic demonstrates in his life the two injunctions in the Bible: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy soul and with all thy heart and with all thy mind," and, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." Loving one's neighbor as oneself means loving the wandering, struggling, suffering souls. These are our neighbors. What can we do if we are called upon to sacrifice our life for one of them? We can remember, over and over again, the teaching, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." Service to God culminates in service to our fellow

man. We cannot separate the two. The impersonal ideal becomes extremely personalized because the whole of humanity is our own. This is the highest expression for the individual. And if we find ourselves not altogether capable of reaching such heights immediately, remember that our life is ever in the process of unfolding. Today, we love some people, and only those whom we call our friends. But as our inner life unfolds, we love more people, our circle enlarges. Our horizon expands and we are loved by many too — not through our own planning or desiring but by the natural working of the law: The more we give, the more our capacity to give increases and the more we receive. Many are brought within the radius of our own existence and we become unlimited in expression.

The personal life is static, it remains limited and self-centered but the impersonal life makes us boundless. We should be progressive; and not static. We must grow, ever breaking down life's narrow boundaries. Do not ever get the idea that you have grown to your utmost capacity or that you have done all you could to fulfill your purpose. That is a delusion. You have not lived fully and completely as yet, neither have you given all you have to give, nor have you suffered enough. This is frightening to many people; but the one who has understanding is not disturbed by pain which is one of life's inevitables. Love entails suffering as does hate. Most people suffer only for themselves while a few there are who suffer for others, because they are so identified with the suffering of the world. They are willing to suffer in order to lighten the world's burden. And what joy there is in being able to lift even a little of the sorrow that weighs heavily on the heart of mankind.

We experience real contentment when we are able to extend ourselves in order to aid others in growing stronger, more steadfast and stable, and when we can inspire them to live their life faithfully and fearlessly. Even an ordinary person can be fired with a spirit of dedication and thus glorify his life. In fact there is no such thing as an ordinary person. All have the same divinity within them; all are One and parts of the Same One. All can reach the highest goal.

Therefore, build your personal life on the best, the highest that is within you — the Unlimited, the Imperishable. Become aware of It, and you will see life's tragedies, failures and imperfections against the background of that One. In time, you may be seized with the desire to give yourself completely and without reserve. Then you will understand why the rare beings on earth want to give not only this one life for the attainment of their ideal, but as many lives as might be given to them, why they are ever expending all they have and all that they are in the passionate love for their God and in His service.

The important thing is sincerely to have surrendered into the hands of God all our interests in pleasure, convenience, and reputation. Whoever casts away all, and accepts without reservation all that God wants to give him of humiliation, suffering, and trials, whether without or within, begins to harden himself against himself. He is not at all afraid of not being approved of, and of not being able to avoid the criticism of men. He has no more hypersensitiveness. This state of full acceptance and constant acquiescence makes true freedom, and this liberty produces perfect simplicity. —Fenelon

WISDOM OF BRAHMANANDA

Life is eternal. The span of man's life is at most a hundred years. Give up the pleasures of these hundred years, if you want to enjoy eternal life and, with it, eternal bliss.

Resign yourself fully to the Lord. He is everything. There is nothing besides Him. "Verily all this is Brahman." Everything is His and His only.

Lose yourself in prayer and meditation. All inner truths will come by themselves, if you practice *sadhana,* spiritual discipline, for some time.

When you sit in meditation, first think of a blissful divine form. This will have a soothing effect upon your nerves. Otherwise meditation will become dry and tedious. Think of the form of your Chosen Ideal, smiling and full of joy . . . Think that your Chosen Ideal is luminous and that His light is lighting everything. Think of Him as living and conscious. As you continue meditation thus on the form of the Chosen Ideal, the form will gradually melt into the Formless, the Infinite. Then will come a vivid sense of the living Presence.

Meditation, in the primary stage, is like waging a war with the mind. Take care that while you meditate you do not overtax your brain. Go slowly. Gradually intensify your efforts. Through regular practice . . . meditation will be easier.

All troubles arise because the mind is not properly trained. There is no enemy more harmful than idle gossip. It ruins one completely. Unless one spends some

time in solitude one cannot understand the workings of the mind and realize the Truth. It is very difficult to grow spiritually along any particular line in the midst of tumult and confusion.

What is ordinarily known as meditation does not deserve the name. The mind is upset by various evil thoughts and tendencies, and worldly matters turn the mind away from the contemplation of God. To attempt time and again to draw the mind inward and fix it on God is the case with the majority of spiritual aspirants. When all the outgoing tendencies of the mind are restrained and the mind flows continuously as a current in the contemplation of God, that stage is called *dhyana,* or meditation. At this stage, the mind forgets all external things and surroundings — even one's own body. It leaves the region of the senses and rises to the supersensuous plane.

Is meditation an easy thing? Remember, it is next to samadhi. Try to leave everything to the Lord. Resign yourself entirely to Him. Devotion, self-surrender, and all other virtues will grow from within as you practice meditation.

The supreme ideal of life is to know God. He shines forth always and everywhere. He dwells within you, He dwells within me, He dwells within all creatures, and in the plants and herbs as well . . . The one supreme Spirit pervades everything. Make Him your ideal, Him and Him alone. Make a little effort to realize Him and then you will see what fun it is . . . There is only a screen hiding the Reality. Remove it and you will find Him.

PATANJALI'S YOGA

by Sister Devamata

Just as a certain amount of preliminary work is necessary in order to construct a strong building, so also in order to practice Yoga or to gain the highest spiritual vision, we need ample preparation. Unless we are willing to pay heed to it, our efforts will all be in vain and we will not succeed in our spiritual strivings. The preliminary work must be well done. As Christ said, unless the house is well-founded on a rock it does not stand; the wind may blow it down and ruin it. So we cannot withstand the difficulties we find in practical life unless we have increased our power of perception, until we have prepared the foundation of our building.

Patanjali gives some practical methods by which we can eliminate the pain-bearing obstructions that stand in the way of our wisdom, the things which cause ignorance; for ignorance is the cause of all bondage.

Through constant practice we must shape new habits, new impressions — in fact a new life — so that the past has no more influence upon us. It is not very easy to break past impressions and the influence of past associations made in this life or previous lives. We have to practice repeatedly; we have to make new impressions on the mind again and again. The mind retains every imprint, and perhaps past impressions are stronger than the present impulses. That is the reason why, when subtle spiritual truths are first declared by a lofty soul, they have very little effect on the ordinary mind. The experience and message are not in accord with the ordinary happenings of human life, and consequently take a little longer to make any impression on the mass-

es. Thus Patanjali suggests constant, habitual practice.

The first time we sit down and try to concentrate our thoughts, try to create an atmosphere by following certain rules, it may not have much effect on the mind, nor give as much as is promised in the books or by the teacher. But as we go on faithfully, as we practice discrimination, we will find that gradually these new impressions become stronger and more dominant, and the past impressions become weaker and weaker until they fade away entirely.

An ancient Indo-Aryan scripture says that there is only one way of ascertaining what is good and what is bad, what is virtue and what is vice: that whenever we help anyone by thought, word, or action, it is called virtue; and whenever, whether consciously or unconsciously, we injure anyone, it is called vice, the only sin that exists. That is the foundation of Indian teaching. The same teaching declares, all that has been taught in thousands and thousands of scriptures he will tell in half a verse — not even a whole verse: not doing harm to another, is indeed the basis of spiritual life; to directly or indirectly injure anyone, is vice.

Now the eight-fold practices which Patanjali gives are called the limbs, or branches, of Yoga. They are the practice of non-killing, truthfulness, non-stealing, continence, non-receiving of gifts, purity, cheerfulness, surrender to God.

Ahimsa is the Sanskrit word for non-killing or the non-injuring of anyone by thought, word, or action. This is the foundation of many spiritual philosophies. The whole teaching of the Lord Buddha is based upon this one principle. Non-killing is the highest of all virtues. If a man practices that, he attains to the Highest.

The idea of non-killing also gives rise to vegetarianism. People who follow this practice are not willing to take life for their own sustenance. The motive which has led mankind to live on food which does not require killing, is the highest motive of all. At the same time we must remember one thing: the ideal of vegetarian living is not merely to live on food that is not animal; it means also the purifying of one's own heart. We must be very careful that we do not bear unkind thoughts in our mind. If we do, then our mind is not fit for a holy life, a contemplative life. The condition of purity is absolutely essential for Yoga practices.

Whenever anyone has practiced ahimsa even for a short time in his words and action, he creates an atmosphere of non-killing. Envious men forget their envious nature when they come in contact with him, and even treacherous animals forget their evil instincts when they approach such a soul. Take the example of Lord Buddha, when he was giving his message to all, without distinction of caste or creed; some men plotted to attack him in the forest where he was absolutely helpless and unprotected, except for his own loving heart, but he knew no fear. When they approached the Buddha, they were overpowered by the influence which radiated from him — the feeling of love, charity, and forgiveness — and they could not strike him.

We often hear of such things. It is a fact that wild animals are known to become tame and forget their instincts in the presence of Yogis who live in the forest. These holy ones sit in contemplation and carry no weapons to protect themselves against the treacherous animals which move freely around them, but they are never touched. What protects them? We say, "God pro-

tects them." True, but why does God protect such men? Because the heart of such a man has no feeling of resistance, and the power of non-resistance is tremendous. We cannot even imagine what it is like until we have tasted the true bliss and happiness which it brings.

When we are incapable of saying or doing anything that is unkind or harmful, when our heart is absolutely free from envy, jealousy, hatred, and all such propensities, there arises the real spirit of non-killing, non-injuring; then have we gained one step which forms the very foundation, the very cornerstone, of the structure we are building in order to gain the superconscious state.

Sometimes people say that Yoga practices are disastrous, especially for the West. Why? For the same reason that Christ gave: "You cannot serve God and Mammon." We cannot compromise. Whenever we take a high principle, a lofty ideal, and try to compromise with our physical desires, with our lower propensities, there will always be a clash.

Our spiritual practices must first be well established, then we may strive to gain that supreme vision which is described as the superconscious state, beyond all limitations of the senses, for without this foundation such vision will be impossible.

Next to non-killing comes the practice of truthfulness — truthfulness in what we say and in what we do. We must be true to the principle of our life, not betraying anyone in thought, word, or action. Whenever anyone practices such truthfulness he acquires great power. Whatever he utters is bound to come true.

We see this illustrated over and over again in the lives of wise men and sages. For instance, there is the

power of healing: "Be thou whole. Be thou healed." This utterance by such a man is at once fulfilled, so great is the power of that man's words. It reveals the tremendous effect of truthfulness, and it means that that man's soul is absolutely free from all hypocrisy.

Next is the practice of non-stealing. That means, of course, that one should not take possession of what does not belong to him; but it also means much more. We should not take more than what we need; we should not try to deceive anyone; we should not be false, untrue; and this is also to be practiced in our thought, word, and action.

The practice of purity means purification of the body, mind, and heart. Purification of the body is, perhaps, the easiest. It can be obtained by cleanliness, which is very important. With certain exertion we can succeed in keeping our surroundings, our clothes, and our body clean. A person who does not keep his body pure and spotless is undoubtedly sinking in *Tamas* — dullness, heaviness. The very fact that he indulges in such low propensities will impede his spiritual growth.

But inner cleanliness is more important. We cannot achieve it except by discipline of mind and thought. We must not allow any low or unclean thought to be harbored in our mind; we must not dwell on things which are unwholesome, for whatever we think, that we assimilate.

The practice of continence also means purity — purity of heart. The soul is pure, spotless; the soul is sexless. The idea of sex, and such limited feelings, rise from bodily consciousness. So long as we confine ourselves to that, we can never know what continence is. It is the idea of the pure life, and in the pure life we find the manifestation of God.

The practice of non-receiving of gifts is not always understood. What has it to do with the spiritual life? Very much, because receiving means dependence; it also means exchange. Always it means bondage, for according to Indian teaching, when a person receives a gift he takes not only the gift but also the quality of the giver. A relationship is established between the two.

Of course the exchange of gifts can sometimes be very helpful, if the source is pure. Then the dependence does no harm. But now we are talking about people who are striving for spiritual consciousness — aspirants who are trying to balance their minds, their thoughts, their consciousness. Therefore they must be independent. For this reason, in India the aspirants who are striving for spiritual life never accept anything. They want no attachment to anything that is worldly, so that they can give their whole heart and soul to God. Then when they attain their Ideal — when they become masters — we find that they desire no possessions; they accept whatever comes.

How can we fully understand these principles? Let us think of it this way: once we have united our heart with the Divine, no longer can we feel any delusion, no longer do we bring in that sense of ego — "I and mine." One who has consecrated his life, whose actions are guided by God, his thoughts, words, and actions — are really done by the Supreme Being, for He is Truth itself.

People often ask how it is that a holy man accepts anything. His idea of acceptance is quite different. He may accept in order to bless another soul, although he has no desire in his own heart; he has risen above all limitation, above all duality; he is not touched by any

bodily action. One who has attained consciousness of the Supreme has severed himself permanently from the little self, and giving to him is almost like giving directly to God.

So we must always understand that there is a vast difference between one who is striving for God-consciousness and one who has attained.

Cheerfulness: this is another virtue we must develop if we want to advance spiritually. We must never let our spirit sink into despair. We must keep faith in our ultimate achievement of the spiritual goal.

Finally, we must practice discipline. There are certain rules as to the hour when we rise, when we bathe, when we do various things, and this routine is followed automatically, voluntarily and involuntarily. We follow it without question, because we say we need it for our physical health and well-being. Similarly, there are definite rules and exercises which we must follow if we are equally interested in our soul's welfare, in the cultivation of soul-consciousness. If we say, as many people do, "I cannot bind myself by such routine," then we are not being true to ourselves. We do bind ourselves to sleeping, to eating, to our physical comforts and habits, and we feel unrest unless we have them.

In the same way, a teacher, a seer, will tell us we need spiritual habits and practices for the health of our soul. He will ask how we are to acquire a healthy soul-life, a wholesome spiritual life, if we are not willing to follow the prescribed rules. So we must learn to discipline our appetites, make our body less attached to comfort and luxury, and prepare it in such a way that it will become a helpful instrument for spiritual conquest.

We need to study in order to train our mind. The mind jumps from one thing to another, but we learn to hold it, and to send it in certain directions, teach it to associate with holiness, train it with purity and worship of God. We surrender all to Him — everything — without reserve.

These are the methods by which we can prepare our foundation for a spiritual life. Patanjali, the philosopher, says they should be practiced without any break, without interruption, and that these rules are universal and for everyone.

We may think there are exceptions, that there are times when we must kill. Not so for a spiritual person, one who has taken up the spiritual life. In the name of religion there cannot be any fight, any quarrel, and if anyone says there are exceptions Patanjali says he is wrong. If we think we cannot follow these spiritual principles and that there must be exceptions, then we are trying to compromise with our lower instincts. That would defeat our purpose and prevent our attaining the ultimate vision.

As we follow these rules of the spiritual life uninterruptedly and without distraction, our doubts disappear and we see things as they are. Our lower nature cannot deceive us, cannot distort the truth, for as we practice, our vision becomes more and more clarified.

Spiritual growth is not a matter of accident, an act of chance; it is the effect of systematic work, work with understanding, work to make the right foundation. Then our life and character become well established, and nothing can shake or move or overthrow us. As Lord Krishna says in the Gita, even the greatest sorrow cannot overcome one who has found himself, his true Self, his true being.

THE ANOINTED

*by Dr. Huston Smith**

When we try to pin down the biographical details of Jesus' life we are immediately struck — and disappointed — by how little definite information is available. We do not know what he looked like, for though the New Testament is about Jesus, nowhere in it is there a physical description of him. Carlyle once said that though he was a poor man he would gladly give a third of everything he had for an accurate representation of Jesus' physical appearance . . . Countless others have yearned to know the human form in which Jesus walked among men those nineteen hundred years ago, but their wishes will have to remain unfulfilled. Those who long for a time machine that would roll back the centuries and set us down in his midst must forever be disappointed. As a consequence, people will continue to visualize him differently. To some he will remain the gentle Jesus, meek and mild, surrounded by children and lambs, who adorns nursery walls. Others will visualize him as a rugged, redbearded prophet swinging over the hills of Palestine toward Jerusalem . . .

John Knox has aptly said that, though the Gospels do not succeed in fully revealing Jesus, they are utterly unable to conceal him. "No critical reader, unless he be entirely devoid of imagination, can miss the might and distinctive force of the personality which moves through their pages . . . Whatever may be lacking in our picture of Jesus, we know more than enough to characterize him as a person of strange and incomparable greatness." Out of obscurity, he steps forth in heroic dimen-

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sions. He belonged to first-century Palestine as Shakespeare belonged to Elizabethan England. It produced him; but it cannot explain him.

Those who were closest to him found themselves gradually induced by what they saw to hold the conviction that he was God. The first acknowledgment of his Messiahship came not from claims he made about himself but from the total impression he made upon his disciples. No man in history has been more exalted since his death, but it is important to remember that no later generation has exalted Jesus more than did his own, the generation of Peter, James, and Paul.

What was there in this life that forced those who knew it best to come to the conclusion that it was divine? The answer takes three parts: What he did, what he said, and what he was . . .

We get a better perspective of Jesus' actions if we place the emphasis where one of his disciples did. Once, while addressing a group, Peter found it necessary to compress into short compass what Jesus did during his lifetime. He put the matter in five short words: "He went about doing good." What a simple epitaph, yet it is difficult to imagine a better one. Easily and without self-consciousness, he moved among the dregs of his society, prostitutes, and tax extortionists. Healing, helping people out of chasms of despair, counseling them in their crises, he went about doing good. He went about doing it with such single-mindedness and effectiveness, in fact, that people who were with him from day to day found their estimate of him modulating to a new category. They found themselves thinking: if God is pure goodness, if he were to take human form, this is the way he would act.

It was not only what Jesus did, however, that made his contemporaries think of him in new dimensions. It was also what he said . . .

The language of Jesus, in fact, is a fascinating study in itself, quite apart from its content. If simplicity, concentration, and the sense of what is vital are marks of great religious literature, these qualities alone would make Jesus' words immortal. But this is just the beginning. They carry an extravagance of which wise men, mindful of capacity for balanced judgment, are incapable . . . The language is part of the man himself, stemming from the urgency and passion of his driving conviction.

And what did he use this language to say? Not a great deal, quantitatively, as far as our records have it. All the words of Jesus as reported in the New Testament can be spoken in two hours. Yet they are the most repeated words in the world. "Love your neighbor as yourself." "Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye also unto them." "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." Most of the time, however, he told stories — parables we call them: of buried treasure, of sowers who went out to sow, of pearl merchants, of a good Samaritan, of a young man who blew his entire inheritance on one huge binge and then found himself cadging scraps from the pigs, of a man who had two sons — the world knows them well. People who heard these stories for the first time were moved to exclaim, "Never spake man thus!"

They were astonished. And small wonder — if we are not it is only because we have heard his words so

often that their edges have been worn smooth by familiarity. If we could recover their original impact, we too would be startled. Their beauty would not cover the fact that they are "hard sayings," a scheme of values so radically at odds with those by which we live that they would rock us like an earthquake . . .

And what, precisely, was he trying to say? Taken together, his parables and beatitudes, indeed everything he said, form the surface of a burning glass which focuses man's awareness on the two most important facts about life: God's overwhelming love for man, and the need for man to receive this love, then let it flow outward again toward his neighbors.

Jesus was an authentic child of Judaism, heir to the best in her magnificent religious heritage . . . As such he inherited the Jewish vision of a God of infinite loving kindness whose entire being is bent on man's salvation. If Jesus differed from his compatriots, it was only in taking this vision of God more seriously and sensing it more directly, not in believing something different. God had been unswerving in his loving kindness and stubborn love. Time after time, as in his story of the Shepherd who risked ninety-nine sheep to go after one that had gone astray, Jesus tries to convey God's absolute love for every single one of his children. To perceive this love, nay to feel it to the very marrow, was to respond in the only way possible, in profound and total gratitude for the wonders of God's grace.

The only way to make sense of Jesus' extraordinary admonitions as to how we should behave toward our fellow men is to see them as cut to fit this understanding of the God who loves man absolutely without pausing to calculate his worth or due. We are to give others

our cloak as well as our coat if they need it — why? Because God has given us what we need. We are to go with others the second mile — again why? Because we know, deeply, overwhelmingly, that God has borne with us not only for a second, but a third, and a fourth, and a fifth. Why should we love not only our friends but our enemies, and pray for those who persecute us? Jesus' answer is explicit: "So that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven, for he makes his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust . . . You, therefore, must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect". . . Plainly the crater from which Jesus' strenuous perfectionism issues is God's astonishing love for man. Correlatively the reason we find his ethic incredible is that we do not share the premise on which it was based. The reason the love Jesus proposed is so demanding is that it is to be absolutely free, geared entirely to our neighbor's needs, not his due. And the reason this seemed to Jesus the natural way to look at the matter is that this is the way God's love has come to us . . .

Through the pages of the Gospels Jesus emerges as a man of surpassing charm and winsomeness who bore about him, as someone has said, no strangeness at all save the strangeness of perfection. He liked people, and they liked him in turn. They loved him; they loved him intensely and they loved him in numbers. Drawn to him irresistibly, they surround him, flock about him, follow him. He stands by the Sea of Galilee and they press so hard about him that he has to speak to them from a boat. He sets out for the day and a crowd of several thousands accumulates, missing their lunch, staying right through until suddenly they discover they are famished. To say that Jesus responded to these

multitudes with an equal love puts the matter the wrong way around — it was the people who were responding to the love which he first had for them. He felt the appeal of people, whether they were rich or poor, young or old, saints or sinners. Mary Magdalene had known many men to love her body, but here was one who loved, instead, *her* — the difference was overwhelming. Jesus had not let even her reputation as a prostitute stand between them. Indeed, whenever conventions raised barriers between person and person, he ignored them. He loved children. He hated injustice because of what it did to what he called, tenderly, "the least of these." Above all, he hated hypocrisy because it hid a man even from himself and precluded that wealth of fellowship he sought to build among men. In the end, especially when he laid down his life for his friends, it seemed to those who knew him best that here was a man in whom the human ego had disappeared completely, leaving his life so completely under the will of God that it became perfectly transparent to that will. It came to the point where they felt that as they looked at Jesus they were looking at the way God would be if He were to assume human form. This is what lies behind their final lyric cry: "We beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten son of the Father, full of grace and truth."

Shakespeare was no great Christian, but he too was moved to tribute:

Some say that ever 'gainst that season comes
Wherein our Savior's birth is celebrated,
The bird of dawning singeth all night long;
And then, they say, no spirit can walk abroad;
The nights are wholesome; then no planets strike,
No fairy tales, nor witch hath power to charm,
So hallow'd and gracious is the time.

FROM AN INDIAN JOURNEY

by Astrid Setterwall Angstrom

The river and its waves are of the same water. What is the difference between the river and its waves? When the water rises in the wave and when it sinks back again, it is the same water. Tell me, my friend, what is the difference? Shall the wave, because it has been named wave, no longer be considered as water?

—KABIR

Lalita takes good care of us in many ways and her benevolence shines over us. She is motherly and good, in both outward appearance and inner qualities. Her rounded full bosoms intimate the yielding sweetness of her nature, and her brown eyes laugh. We pass many hours waiting for her car. But what does it matter! We own time!

Lalita belongs to those people who, wherever they are and however old they grow, bring with them the spirit of their childhood's home. Her father had given the name *Mukti,* freedom, to that home. His idea was that the home should mean freedom from the world. In the home that discipline should take place which leads to perfection. Some seek liberation through abandoning home and family and everything that binds men and women to each other, while others try to see the Divine everywhere in daily life. As the home is their world, it is there they have to realize freedom. Their hearts sing with the poet, Rabindranath Tagore:

Deliverance is not for me in renunciation.
I feel the embrace of freedom in a thousand bonds of delight . . ."

Therefore, it is natural that Lalita bring me to see her mother. A widow for some years, this old lady lives in turn with her children.

The family home is large, elegant and old-fashioned. The garden is flowering with abundant loveliness. The room we enter is harmonious in proportions and contains few but exquisite pieces of antique furniture.

Once there were twelve brothers and sisters in the family. Several of them still live together. They are friendly, gay and round. They make me feel welcome among them. Children of all ages are either seen or heard. The small ones peep at me with large dark eyes from behind the skirts of their mothers; the older ones are practicing classical singing in other rooms. Lalita's own daughter has a refined gentleness and the swift movements which are often found in the very young Indian girls.

One of Lalita's sisters, who seems more or less covered with glittering jewels, entertains me in a lively interested way as we await her mother. She tells me that her father had let his wife, who was of a mystical nature, have her own expression. He permitted her to have her guru living in the house. And, she continues to tell me, this guru was an illumined soul who lived in constant communion with God.

Without a sound the mother suddenly enters the room. The grandchildren fall on their faces before her and take the dust off her feet. A clear stillness settles in the room. This elderly woman has skin soft as velvet. Her eyes look searchingly into mine. Then she smiles — and we are no more strangers.

She, as a woman of the world, has been used to meeting different kinds of people. She has travelled

much, even outside India. She thinks it valuable to know people from other countries. "It is good to travel and see the beautiful things of the world," she says. "But first of all you should realize God. Then as you look around, you will see all things in that light and rejoice. Then you will find that all is Divine. For the one who sees with sharpened sight and whose heart is open, life on earth is only a thin veil over the face of God."

I ask, "Have you realized God?" She answers simply, "Yes." Again she emphasizes, "First realize Him! Learn to know Him and put all your trust in Him! Then alone is it possible to do something for others — not before. And when you have comprehended His reality and surrendered yourself to become His tool, you will find peace."

To clarify what she means by realization of God she tells me of her own experiences: She and her husband had lived together according to the Indian ideal of marriage. The husband saw in her the personification of the Divine Mother, and she beheld the Divine in him. In this great love of self-forgetfulness and merging in each other they created their home-world. The two of them were so united that while her husband was still alive she could never have thought of remaining on earth without him. The natural solution for her in such a case would have been to follow him in death.

As I hear the aging woman talk it occurs to me that such a love, and such a conscious direction of it toward a union that reaches further than death, must be the Indian woman's way to realize her goal of perfection. It was this urge that in former times made her mount her husband's funeral pyre. The mother goes on telling

me that when that time came for her husband to leave her, she had arrived at another view of life. She had realized God and come to look upon life on earth as an opportunity that must not be thrown away. She had understood that those whom we love live in us even when they are dead, and we who remain must carry on their love. So his passing meant something different from what she had formerly believed.

Again and again she returns to that which she wants to stress: "Realize God first of all! Dive in the ocean of *Satchidananda* — Existence-knowledge-bliss! Then return to the relative world and you will see how all reflects the Unlimited — That in which, 'the sun does not shine, nor the moon, nor the stars, nor fire,' but by whose light everything shines. When you have had that vision, take all as it comes: Perform steadily the tasks that are before you; do your duty to the best of your ability. Stand still, as it were, and let the breakers of life roar against you. That is all you can do. But you have to love God for His sake. Do not ask anything from Him. Never bargain with Him; only love Him and live for Him."

These are impressive words. They are pronounced in such a gentle but definite manner that they create a silence which lasts until she herself continues: "We Indian women do not expect that life is going to be anything but hard. We try to build up a strength of resistance in our young ones so that they never will be brought to self-pity. If you are indifferent to your own suffering, you are able to stand life's difficulties right to the end, and thus gain freedom through self-forgetfulness."

Lalita's mother now lives the retired life of a widow.

She wears neither gaily dyed saris nor jewelry. She eats but one meal a day and spends most of her time in solitude. She observes the holy days and devotes herself to worship.

The daughters tell me that they can always ask for advice from her and receive good, wise answers. But they feel that their mother more and more withdraws herself from the outer life and turns inward. She has given them this counsel: "If you are tired, try not to show it! Others are only interested in the results of your labor — not in the toiling itself."

When the door opens to the shrine-room a wave of small grandchildren wells through it right up to the images. They prostrate and touch the floor with their foreheads mumbling, "Hari Om. Hari Om."

Portraits of the guru who lived here, as well as portraits of the great-grandmother's guru who was also a holy man, hang on the walls. The guru of olden times one day bid his disciples farewell saying that it was time for him to leave them. He blessed them, entered a hut and closed the door behind him. Nobody saw him after that. Some time later his disciples tried to open the door. They did not succeed and the authorities had to break it open. They found nothing in the room. Only a light — *jyoti* — remained. Every year those who know about this gather together in the little village; and when the door to the house is opened the light floods through it. The daughters who tell me this have been there; they say they have seen it, and they look at me with big believing eyes. But they still live in the soft net of legends and folklore. It is only the old mother who has torn its meshes.

As I rise to leave, the question is put to me, "Would you like to see our jewelry?" Thick necklaces of gold and of pearls in double rows, earrings, nose ornaments and rings lie in cases of fragrant sandalwood. There is a piece of jewelry from the great-grandmother's time consisting of large yellowish, lustrous pearls. The dowry of each daughter is one necklace of gold and one of diamonds. The mother takes these gems in her hands and lets them glide through her fingers. Possibly she remembers when those shining pearls lay around her mother's neck, around her own. Perhaps the festival days of her life pass by in her memory although they do not mean anything to her now. She may not even permit memories to rise in her consciousness. She lives only in the present. She no longer attaches her mind to that which changes and passes. She is at rest in her Self. With tenderness she repeats again and again, "First of all, realize God!"

Once more I see Lalita. It is evening. Our trunks are packed. In my dark travelling suit I stand in the door to our bungalow listening to the sounds of the night, to the monkeys jumping on the roof, to the forest doves, to the unknown rustle. Then she comes through the darkness. She has put on her most magnificent orange colored sari with wide borders in gold brocade. Large pearls hang from her ears. The dowry — the heavy gold chain with the diamond necklace — lies around her plump throat. She wears golden sandals. With softly rounded movements, and with an open, childish, warm smile, she glides through the door into the bare room from which everything personal has already been taken away. She seems like a strange bril-

liant flower as she sits there telling us about temple feasts, about holy men and women.

As a farewell present she gives me a box of sandalwood. Its fine fragrance will always remind me of Lalita who brought me into her own world where the Mother is the center.

SPIRITUAL LIVING

by Swami Parampanthi

Reality is the one, pervading Absolute which is simultaneously immanent and transcendent. It is the one, eternal Existence, blissful, non-dual and infinite. And the soul of man is completely identical with this Reality which may be envisioned as Law, or Being, or Presence, as God — impersonal and personal. The highest aim of life, thus, is to regain this basic identity which man has apparently temporarily lost. From the highest point of view the soul is ever one with God — the apparent loss of identity and the gain of it being merely a projection of relative reality. So, the attainment of God does not signify attainment of something new, but the realization of divine origin.

Religion is a process of rediscovery of the unity between man and God. This goal can also be conceived as Self-realization or God-realization (the liberation of the soul from the law of recurrent birth and death and consequent sufferings)— God being the Self of man in the real sense of the term. Anything that hampers this process of unity is injurious to human destiny. The most vital question before us is how to attain this unity.

The human personality presents a perpetual dichotomy of good and evil, selfishness and selflessness, spirit-

ual urges and secular ambitions. Under this condition three ways are open to man: the way of secular living; the harmony of secular and spiritual striving, and the way of uncompromising spiritual living. The first is the way of unmitigated flesh which has already proved its worthlessness in the evolution of man. The second indicates a compromise involving seeming harmony between flesh and soul. This, too, which has been advocated and followed by many people, has revealed its inadequacy and failure to effect a complete transformation of the human into the divine. Therefore, the third is the only way that can lead man out of the chaotic predicament of mortal life in bondage.

The spiritual life is the only answer to man's perennial quest and problem. It is the one highway to God. However, if this assertion is true, then it seems that there is no hope of liberation or God-consciousness for many millions all over the world who are not recluses and are not in a position to renounce the world. But this supposition is based upon wrong assumptions pertaining to what is the spiritual way of living in human life as a whole. I use the phrase, "the spiritual way of living," to convey a specific technique which is attainable by all persons under all circumstances, provided each has the basic, essential qualities of sincerity and persistence. Sincerity frees man from self-deception, while persistence leads him to actual participation in the life of the spirit.

Spiritual living implies, in the first place, a state of awareness, and in the second place, a state of action which flows from this fundamental awareness. It denotes, on the one hand, a specific philosophy of life and on the other, a specific pattern and plan of action

for living. The awareness calls for direct recognition of the life of the spirit as the only desirable way of living; our spiritual aspirations must be at the center of our whole personality. This frank, deliberate and definite understanding that our life has justification only because it is meant for God-realization is the starting point. There should be no beating about the bush, no vacillation of the mind on this vital issue. Once this momentous decision is made, the aspirant is already on the way. This is indeed a big step. More often than not, we delude ourselves by going into the by-lanes of the spiritual life, by hesitating on the brink of decision, by wavering, by taking faltering steps toward the higher way of life. But once the supreme Goal is recognized, once the mind is set in earnest resolution upon fulfilling the demands of the highest destiny, once the whole power of the aspirant is harnessed to this gigantic task, he has an overpowering sense of exultation, a delight, born of the resolution, that changes his whole personality.

Man himself is the maker of his own destiny; therefore, it is imperative that he visualize God-realization as the ultimate goal, and spiritual living as the means to that goal. Some people deceive themselves with the idea that religion is a pleasing culmination of life's process, that after the full enjoyment of living religion will come unsought to them bringing peace and glory. This is sheer illusion — nonsensical to the extreme. Some people, again, think of religion as an insuperable contradiction to normal life. They think that there is an irreducible dichotomy between religion and normal living, that religion is totally foreign to human nature. This idea is equally untenable and an example of self-

deception, for spiritual life is as old as the hills. It does not stand for total suppression, for unnaturalness and antagonisms in relation to the life and destiny of humanity. When we accept religion as an inseparable part of our being, when we spontaneously and joyously accept spiritual life as a vocation, it loses its baneful shadows and becomes a luminous guide and inspiration for our day-to-day existence.

In this world, action is the only means of transformation and upliftment, of development and illumination. To most people religion is a thing to be used now and then and kept in a closet according to whim and fancy. However, true success of religious life calls for regular and powerful action. The awareness of the value and importance of spiritual living must lead us daily to specific actions and aspirations. The human organism is a delicate and powerful instrument. Changeable and subject to habit-forming processes, it is highly impressionable and capable of undergoing astonishing modifications. Thus to make our life truly spiritual, we must take advantage of these qualities and mold ourselves anew in the light, and by the guidance of spirit.

The technique of religious life is nothing but the method of making religion a spontaneous part of our daily life. It teaches us how to permeate our entire organism with holy thoughts and symbols, with spiritual action and meditation, and so place religion at the very center of our whole life and being. This is not difficult if we first make spiritual life our second nature, and then gradually, by constant emphasis on spiritual moods and habits, and through repetition of certain acts make it our first and foremost nature.

A simple technique is followed by truly religious

people in India in order to make spiritual life the very basis of daily living.

In India the life of a truly religious man begins with the dawn. When first he opens his eyes he sees an image of a holy person or a saviour, or a sacred symbol capable of arousing spiritual thoughts. He leaves his bed with the name of the Lord on his lips, greets the rising sun and the entire family in His name and murmurs a prayer or a chant. As he takes his bath he sings a religious song, and a short meditation follows. Finally he enters into the round of activities with an ambient feeling of spirituality and serene well-being. While he performs his daily duties the spiritual mood continues and suffuses his whole being. Sometimes it lights up his face with an inner glow; at other time it is like an undercurrent only rising to the surface in an occasional wave. But the mood is always there, insulating the man against the bondage and pain, the grossness and greed, the involvement and ungodliness of the world, and filling up his entire being with the holy fragrance of God. This mood can be compared to that of a man who suddenly receives very good news. What happens to him? While he does his daily round of duties his soul sings joyfully; a constant sense of well-being bubbles up to the surface of his being. Perhaps he is especially kind to family and friends; his laughter rings out with an added gusto; his eyes sparkle; he walks on air, as it were. Thus, behind the man's daily life, Reality and his joy in It are constantly manifested.

This is a technique that can be applied to make the religious mood one's constant companion. The Indian has this feeling which comes from true religious fervor and is independent of all outer circumstances. He cher-

ishes the spirit and, consciously or unconsciously, cultivates it through daily meditation and prayer, through solitude and tranquility of heart and soul in the midst of all his activities and responsibilities. And there is no element of compulsion here; everything is done effortlessly, spontaneously and naturally through habit and practice.

Is this mood attainable by all people irrespective of the conditions in which they find themselves? Yes, it is possible. However, we must remember that the attainment of anything difficult and precious calls for three things: regularity of practice, sincerity and the urge for ultimate perfection. In spiritual life, these things are essential if one is to reach the highest goal — God-realization. Regularity sets the whole process into motion; sincerity intensifies it, and the urge for perfection allows no chance to get trapped in the by-lanes of religion — it forces him to go on and on until the goal is reached.

Regularity of spiritual practice is a necessity. The constant remembrance of God, association with holy people and ideas, pilgrimage to holp places, self-examination, meditation and prayer at regular intervals, study, occasional fasting and the repetition of the Lord's name all have one specific purpose: to make spiritual living an integral, natural and effortless part of our entire personality. Moreover, all these, including rituals, going to temple or church, singing and the like have the same goal. Discussion of higher topics, practice of self-control and increasing hunger for God are some of the means to unite soul with God.

Let a true seeker give, at the beginning, fifteen minutes each day to the study of the principles of religion

and the lives of great souls. And once the basic ideas are firmly established in his mind he will naturally endeavor to associate himself with all that is good, pure and holy, and dissociate himself from what is ungodly and evil. Then let him turn his thought for a few minutes daily to holy spiritual things. He can do this all by himself or in the company of like-minded family or friends; then let him relax and reflect on God and finally slip into deeper thinking which ultimately leads to meditation. Daily repetition of this technique gradually deepens the impressions of spiritual life, heightens the perception and increases the feeling of bliss. If the seeker retains his spiritual mood over a long period each day he may become effortlessly religious. As he progressively withdraws from secular activities his spiritual illumination gradually increases. This does not mean escapism but the growth of an awareness that insulates the seeker even when he is in the midst of much worldly activity.

The true aspirant must be selective. Life is short and many-sided; there is much to be done; many difficulties challenge man; many obligations and responsibilities claim his attention and expend energy. So the person who is bent on God-realization has to cut through all the superficialities in the pursuit of which most people exhaust their vitality. This does not mean that a seeker should be blind to real duties, but that he must strive to be always conscious of the essentials and to make the best of his God-given life. He must take stock of how he spends his time and learn to utilize his energy toward his own spiritual advancement. Constant attempt should be made to by-pass the unimportant and to transcend the ephemeral. There must be an overpowering

sense of urgency, a burning aspiration to catch hold of the Real which is beyond the evanescent, the glittering superficialities.

It is certain that if a true seeker gives daily half an hour to God, prayerfully, earnestly, a great change will take place in him. But he must not stop there; he must go on. Intensity should increase with the passing of time and the aspiration must be for the attainment of the meditative state for at least two hours without the slightest interruption. However, the religious life must not be allowed to function in a watertight compartment isolated from the rest of the personality and its drives, its hopes and dreams. Religious life must gradually and increasingly permeate the entire being, purifying desires, uplifting hopes, modifying ambitions and spiritualizing the whole life and its surroundings. It must express itself in one's temperament and daily behavior-pattern, and in all relationships.

The technique of spiritual life does not depend on a special creed or dress, on dogmatic assertions or denials, on specific occupations or observance of rules. It does not demand that the seeker should give up his normal way of life or vocation. Each person from his own place in life can attain God-realization provided he is sincere in his striving and honestly persistent. No outward renunciation of responsibility or occupation is demanded of him. Only a pure and dedicated way of life is called for — the giving up of lust and greed, attachment and bondage.

What about desire, ambition, hope, self-seeking and other natural traits — physical, sexual and secular? Do they not stand as obstacles to the highest illumination? The answer is, yes, they do. But spiritual technique

does not demand at the beginning a perfect, pure body and mind. To a certain extent, the functions of these urges are not altogether obstructive to the development of the aspirant, though ultimately they certainly do hinder the fullest manifestation of God-consciousness.

But how are we to eliminate these inborn tendencies? Two ways are generally suggested: forcible suppression, and elimination through the upliftment of the self to the level of constant holy association and illumination. Suppression may involve a process of self-torture which is often fruitless. It is better to pay no attention to these urges, but rather to turn the motive-force of life to higher channels of self-expression—to permeate the whole range of human consciousness with holy aspirations. Thus the springs of desire and passion, the restless dynamics and egoistic impulses will gradually dry up because the very motivating impulse will no longer be functioning; they will fall off like ripe fruits and with no compulsion or self-mortification involved in it. The truth of this well-tested method has been proved again and again beyond the shadow of a doubt.

Is it possible to perform our normal duties and to be simultaneously utterly free from the natural urges? Is the complete elimination of these urges the price of God-realization? The unhesitating answer is, yes, and it is possible. How? By a spirit of detachment. The spirit of detachment is the highway of spiritual living; it makes possible man's participation in all natural and social duties without the binding influences and reactions that flow from such a participation. A true seeker must have the spirit of detachment which would free him from bondage and involvement. But detachment by itself is incomplete and neutral if it does not have as its coun-

terpart the uplifting force of a degree of spiritual illumination and support.

The technique is to visualize everything in the light of one abiding Divinity, to transmute all things into manifestations of God, to lift the mind to the level of mystical values. This attitude can transform unattractive and monotonous daily duties into shining diamonds of joy and fulfillment. It is the adventure of the spirit; it is religion in action. By it the seeker becomes the great lover; the individual becomes the universal soul; the dull, apparently meaningless life becomes a perpetual unfoldment of divinity. Within the domain of a living God every particle of dust becomes transfigured.

VISWAMANDIR

The word *viswa* is universe in Sanskrit and *mandir* is temple. Therefore, Viswamandir means the place where the God of the universe is enshrined. This is the name, given the temple in La Crescenta, California by Swami Paramananda when it was built thirty-one years ago. Now the second temple, in Cohasset Massachusetts, bears the same name, as this too, is the fulfillment of the Swami's dream.

It has been constructed by skilled labor together with consecrated service. The two longer walls — a real work of art — are made of the Ashrama's own field stone of various colors and sizes — some with moss growing on them. At one end of the front wall there is a tablet of blue stone upon which are engraved the words:

The light of the soul knoweth no boundary lines,
It hath no east nor west, north nor south,
Yea, the light of the soul shineth everywhere.
Paramananda

The fire place with its seven-foot arch and blue stone seat is also made of field stone. It occupies a prominent place at the center of the rear wall.

The clerestory windows with nine panes of glass run the entire length of each wall under the deep curved overhang of the slate roof. Against ten of the window panes will hang the medallions in multicolored stained glass symbolizing each religion. They have been designed by one of the Vedanta Centre's devotees, Donna Normand.

The two doors in the south wall (which is finished in white cedar) are used for exit only. When open, they frame a view of the woods sloping down towards "Nature's Sanctuary," Ashrama's cathedral of pines. From the steps below these doors, looking inside, one sees the majestic Persian arches of laminated fir which support the building. The ceiling too is in natural wood.

The unfinished interior will, by next spring, it is hoped, be paneled with oak from Ashrama trees, felled by the hurricane of 1954. Pines and maples have also given their offering in the finishing of sections of the large room adjoining the temple.

The "Om-on-the-Lotus" window, made of stained glass of many shades of yellow, occupies the center of the southern wall. Regarded as part of the altar, it dominates the entire temple. It is immediately above the altar which bears the Sanskrit inscription: *Truth is one men call It by various names.* Two shallow niches have been made on either side of the speaker's platform at the center of which the altar stands. These will hold the two bas-reliefs created many years ago for the Centre's Chapel in Boston. One is of Krishna, Buddha and Christ and the other of Sri Ramakrishna,

and his two foremost disciples, Sri Sarada Devi and Swami Vivekananda.

Even though few services have been held within its walls, the temple already impresses one with its vibrant atmosphere of peace.

DEDICATION OF THE NEW TEMPLE

Sunday, October fourth was chosen for the dedication of Viswamandir, the new temple at the Ananda Ashrama in Cohasset, and seemed like a day of miracle. It dawned bright, warm and clear. On the preceding Friday, which was *Mahalaya,* a most auspicious time according to the Hindu calendar, the private consecration ceremonies had taken place with the lighting of the first fire in the fire-altar as well as other forms of ritualistic worship. These had been held in spite of untidy conditions due to unfinished construction.

On Sunday, the temple seemed, standing on its foundation of rock among the tall trees, with a carpet of golden pine needles spread about it, as though it had always been there. The simple arched doors, which form the main entrance in the glass walls of the foyer or reception and library room, were thrown open an hour before the services began. On the opposite wall, surrounded by amber glass, hung the life-sized portrait of Swami Paramananda. It created a startling impression of his living person, as if he were standing there to greet the congregation, which came singly and in groups entering reverently the new house of worship, filling it to capacity. The total attendance at the two services amounted to nearly two hundred and fifty people.

The prelude played on the new organ opened the eleven o'clock service. It was the offering of a young

musician, Mark Novack. Then followed the music of the chimes, traditionally associated with the Vedanta Centre's services. Mr. Einar Hansen of the Boston Symphony then played three selections on his violin, followed by Eunice Langenbach, who sang two of the Swami's poems, "Think on Me" and "How Sweet is the Sound of Silence." She was accompanied by Pauline Creesy at the organ.

Srimati Gayatri Devi walked up to the platform as the Ashrama's theme song, "In Solitude's Inmost Stillness," was sung. After the opening prayer, Srimati Snehalata Devi melodiously rendered a Sanskrit chant, a devotional supplication. Gayatri Devi spoke on "Worship of One and Many" striking the note of universality inherent in Vedanta and interpreting the approach to the One through His many aspects and manifestations. She drew attention to the fact that the new temple could justify its existence and fulfill its true purpose only if it were to become alive with the presence of the living God and emanate an atmosphere of peace. She reaffirmed many of Swami Paramananda's ideals to which the lives of the resident community and the Ashrama as a whole were consecrated. "The message," she said, "that is to be spread from this temple must ever remain free from all dogma, bigotry and sectarianism," and read Sri Ramakrishna's words: "We must build on different foundations from the makers of religions. We must live an inner life so intense that it becomes a Being. The Being will give birth to innumerable torches of truth . . . Rivers flow because their parent, the mountain, remains immovable . . . Let us raise a mountain of God in the midst of humanity. It matters little where and when. When it has been raised,

it will continue to pour forth rivers of light and compassion over mankind forever."

Sol Ginsberg was called upon to read the congratulatory messages that had been received from many places, abroad and in the United States.

William S. Chin, the temple's architect, who has given an oriental quality to the building which nevertheless harmonizes so perfectly with its New England setting, offered a few words of greeting. Joseph G. Reynolds, who created the "Om-on-the-Lotus" window and is one of America's two most highly reputed stained-glass artists, then gave his brief message.

Brother Richard Creesy, whose inspiring foremanship of the entire construction has been a major contribution, was called upon to speak a few words. He came forward reluctantly and read Swami Paramananda's poem, "Weaver," in which the poet speaks of himself as a straw in the Great Weaver's hand.

The sun shone brightly through the gold, yellow, amber, and orange glass of the OM window. During the service Gayatri Devi explained the meaning of OM. She told the congregation that this particular form of the Word resting, as it does, on the multi-petalled lotus had been conceived by Swami Vivekananda. Swami Paramananda, his disciple, many years ago had the same carved in wood making a large plaque which ever since has hung above the Vedanta Centre's altar in Boston.

The afternoon service followed soon after the informal lunch which was served on the lawn near the gardens and the lower rocks. It was a picture of serene relaxation and fellowship as one hundred and twenty-five people gathered together to participate in the day's celebration.

The three o'clock service began with an organ recital rendered by Valmore Morris. Eunice Langenbach then sang the chant, "Oh, Lord Let Me Give My Whole Heart to Thee," after which the Bengali supplication to Sri Ramakrishna was sung in chorus.

Srimati Gayatri Devi's sermon was a brief and inspired one. She draw attention to the fact that the temple was being dedicated not to Hinduism alone but to the one God and to all religions, these to be eventually represented by corresponding symbols in stained glass, two of which, Hinduism and Christianity, were hung in time for the day's services.

Dr. Myron W. Fowell, Executive Secretary of the Massachusetts Conference of Congregational Churches, a guest speaker for the day, was next introduced. Dr. Fowell followed the theme, "Harmony of Religions." He spoke of the universal symbol of light, a tradition of Christianity, Judaism and Zoroastrianism and mentioned the fact of Truth's being symbolized in the meditation room of the U. N. headquarters in New York by a shaft of light and a growing plant.

Rev. Roscoe E. Trueblood, the minister of the Unitarian Church of Cohasset, spoke spontaneously. In a letter he later wrote: "I found it a privilege to be present that day; there was something quite enriching about the experience." We give elsewhere, in part, Rev. Trueblood's address.

More messages and greetings were shared following which Gayatri Devi read the day's lesson from Swami Paramananda's *Book of Daily Thoughts and Prayers.*

In conclusion all stood to receive the benediction as it was chanted in Sanskrit and translated into English:

May He who is the Father in heaven of the Christians,

Allah of the Mohammedans,
Jehovah of the Jews,
Ahura-Mazda of the Zoroastrians,
Buddha of the Buddhists,
Tao of the Chinese,
Divine Mother and Brahman of the Indo-Aryans
Grant unto us His peace.
Peace, Peace, Peace be unto us and to all living beings.

MESSAGES AND LETTERS

Today, in this temple erected to the one God, in this place of quiet beauty there is a natural solemnity, a spirit that speaks of firm courage and whispers, "Be still and know that I am God."

Here under this temple is a foundation of solid rock, a chain of feldspar and granite which runs clear across the town of Cohasset with frequent outcroppings, a foundation which relates us with the entire countryside. Here are stout oaks and noble maples standing like sentinels in heat and cold, bearing witness to their Creator. Here we may listen to the songs of birds offering testimony: "Glory be unto the Father." The symbolism in all this spells universality and interrelatedness. It may remind you, as it has reminded me, of some familiar lines from Wordsworth:

. . . and I have felt
A presence that disturbs me with the joy
Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime
Of something far more deeply interfused
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns
And the round ocean and the living air
And the blue sky and in the mind of man:
A motion and a spirit that impels

All thinking things, all objects of all thoughts,
And rolls through all things . . .

We may believe that nothing was placed upon this earth without purpose. Sometimes we understand this purpose and sometimes we do not. Then what can we better do than to interpret in terms of our highest standards of holiness, all that life offers? What can we better believe than that it is the will of God that we discover by our lives the finest and noblest meaning that can be revealed through knowledge and insight?

—Rev. Roscoe E. Trueblood
Minister, Unitarian Church, Cohasset, Mass.

I pray to Sri Ramakrishna and the Holy Mother to shower their choicest blessings on this temple of the Ananda Ashrama on this happy occasion. May all who will visit the temple from far and near henceforward be full of life and light, spiritual, and may they be enabled to live the life divine . . . Peace be to all. —Swami Kailashananda, Sri Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore, Madras.

Blessed indeed is the day which dawns upon Ashram with the inauguration of such a universal temple, and blessed are those who have contributed both morally and materially to the success of such a great cause. —Swami Sambuddhananda, Sri Ramakrishna Mission, Bombay.

May the Self-luminous, All-pervading Being, to whom the temple is being dedicated, who is all love and all bliss, bless the place by His ever gracious Presence. May He be manifest in the hearts of all worshipping there. —Swami Satprakasananda, Vedanta Society of St. Louis, Mo.

My sincere prayer is that those who come to the new temple may develop the universal spirit and find inner peace. —Swami Nikhilananda, Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Center, New York, N. Y.

As you gather together for the dedication of the new temple of the Universal Spirit, we tune our hearts with yours. May it be permeated and sanctified by His holy Spirit and bring peace and blessing to countless souls. Jai Guru! —Ananda Ashrama, La Crescenta, Calif.

Permit me to take this opportunity to extend to you my most intentional wishes that the Temple of the Universal Spirit will be a beacon casting its beams of light into many areas of darkness. —Dr. Howard Thurman, Dean of the Chapel, Boston University.

I see how auspicious is the day of dedication, it being St. Francis of Assisi day. It will be with prayerful thoughts that I will be present at your solemn dedication of Viswamandir. —Dr. Karel Hujer, University of Chattanooga, Tennessee.

For years you have carried on this mission so nobly in giving utterance to our inner yearning. May you be bounteously blessed in continuing the idea of "the Infinite personality, whose light reveals itself through the obstruction of darkness." It is with profound gratitude that we Chinese, stemming from the Far East like yourselves, can have the precious privilege of your friendship and wisdom which you share with us. —Dr. Tehyi Hsieh, Honorary Chinese Consul.

Though I cannot be there in person, my heart is with you and joins yours in making joyful music to

celebrate the dedication of the Swami's new temple. —Dr. Irma Glen, Religious Science leader, California.

This temple might always have been there, both in and of the lovely woods, a miracle of heavenly goodness and earthly devotion. It is no surprise to me that it is a place where all may worship, but it was good again to hear your thoughts on universal religion and your interpretation of its symbolism throughout the temple. The ceremonies of dedication were simple and real and therefore truly beautiful. —Esther Preston.

Ever since that beautiful Sunday when we arrived so unexpectedly at the Ashram I have been meaning to tell you what joy it gave us to be a part of the special celebration. The temple is so appropriate and indigenous in every way that it already seems like a well established part of the Ashram. May it serve long and well in fostering the peace and serenity so needed in this day and age. —Edith Swain.

Exquisite chalice of beauty and faith,
May we all drink deep of you.
May your stained-glass jewels catch the light
Of the sun in myriad hue.
May you challenge the bigoted everywhere —
Moslem, Christian, and Jew —
And help them find in each cherished creed
What the sages always knew.

—Dorothy Hanson

May this abode inspire everyone to see Him in all is our humble prayer. —Kanti and Moolraj Mathur.

Due to shortage of space the autumn "Calendar of Events" will be included in the spring issue.

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